

SURGICAL STAPLING INSTRUMENT HAVING A FIRING LOCKOUT
FOR AN UNCLOSED ANVIL

Cross Reference to Related Applications

[0001] The present application is related to four co-pending and commonly-owned applications filed on even date herewith, the disclosure of each is hereby incorporated by reference in their entirety, these four applications being respectively entitled:

(1) "SURGICAL STAPLING INSTRUMENT HAVING A SINGLE LOCKOUT MECHANISM FOR PREVENTION OF FIRING" to Frederick E. Shelton IV, Mike Setser, and Bruce Weisenburgh;

(2) "SURGICAL STAPLING INSTRUMENT HAVING SEPARATE DISTINCT CLOSING & FIRING SYSTEMS" to Frederick E. Shelton, Mike Setser, and Brian J. Hemmelgarn;

(3) "SURGICAL STAPLING INSTRUMENT HAVING A SPENT CARTRIDGE LOCKOUT" to Frederick E. Shelton IV, Mike Setser, Bruce Weisenburgh; and

(4) "SURGICAL STAPLING INSTRUMENT INCORPORATING AN E-BEAM FIRING MECHANISM" to Frederick E. Shelton IV, Mike Setser, and Bruce Weisenburgh.

Field of the Invention

[0002] The present invention relates in general to surgical stapler instruments that are capable of applying lines of staples to tissue while cutting the tissue between those staple lines and, more particularly, to improvements relating to stapler instruments and improvements in processes for forming various components of such stapler instruments.

Background of the Invention

[0003] Surgical staplers have been used in the prior art to simultaneously make a longitudinal incision in tissue and apply lines of staples on opposing sides of the incision. Such instruments commonly include a pair of cooperating jaw members that, if the instrument is intended for endoscopic or laparoscopic applications, are capable of passing through a cannula passageway. One of the jaw members receives a staple cartridge having at least two laterally spaced rows of staples. The other jaw